
Hotel 247 launches refurbished restaurant, strengthening black women's ownership and tourism growth in Mpumalanga

White River, Mpumalanga - The National Empowerment Fund (NEF), in partnership with the Department of Tourism, today celebrated the official launch of Hotel 247's refurbished restaurant, marking a milestone in the growth of a black woman-owned hospitality enterprise and the continued transformation of South Africa's tourism industry.

The occasion brought together Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms Makhotso Sotyu, Deputy Minister of Police Mr Cassel Mathale, Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development and Tourism Ms Jesta Sidell, NEF Chief Executive Officer Mr Mziwabantu Dayimani and Hotel 247 owner Ms Khosi Mthalane.

Acquired by Mthalane in 2021, Hotel 247 is a 100% black woman-owned, three-star establishment in White River, offering 52 rooms, restaurant and bar facilities, and conferencing services.

The investment has enabled the modernisation of the restaurant, including upgraded furniture and equipment, with seating capacity increasing from 140 to 200 patrons. Alternative-energy infrastructure has also been introduced to strengthen the hotel's operational resilience.

The project has benefited from a R1.65 million grant through the Tourism Transformation Fund, a R1.65 million NEF senior loan and R242,600 in alternative-energy funding. The establishment currently employs 30 people, while the investment has created five additional permanent jobs and supported 15 temporary jobs during the renovation phase.

Tourism transformation through enterprise growth

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Makhotso Sotyu, said: "Tourism transformation becomes meaningful when black entrepreneurs are able to own productive assets, improve their businesses and compete in the market. Hotel 247 demonstrates the value of combining financial support with entrepreneurial ambition. We want to see more women participating in tourism not only as employees, but as owners of sustainable enterprises that create employment and contribute to their communities."

The refurbishment was supported through the Tourism Transformation Fund, a partnership between the Department of Tourism and the NEF aimed at expanding meaningful black ownership and participation in the tourism sector.

NEF CEO, Mr Mziwabantu Dayimani, said the occasion demonstrated the importance of measuring development finance by the opportunities it creates.

"The true measure of investment is not simply how much funding we approve, but what that funding enables. At Hotel 247, we see an entrepreneur strengthening her business, expanding capacity and improving the guest experience. Our ambition is for that growth to extend beyond this property, creating opportunities for suppliers, tourism operators and other businesses in the surrounding economy."

Building a competitive and connected tourism economy

The launch also provided a platform for four NEF-supported enterprises to exhibit their products and services: Maduka Resources, Times Ten Workwear, Mbombela Experience and Sibusiso Mogale Production.

The exhibitors represent engineering, manufacturing, tourism and agriculture, illustrating opportunities for commercial relationships across different sectors. Mbombela Experience is also a Tourism Transformation Fund beneficiary, offering tours and transfers connecting visitors to Mpumalanga's attractions.

Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Ms Jesta Sidell, said:

"Mpumalanga's natural attractions give us a strong tourism offering, but sustained growth also depends on the quality and competitiveness of our enterprises. Investments such as this one strengthen our destination while creating opportunities for businesses operating across the tourism value chain. We want visitors to stay longer, experience more of our province and contribute to local economic activity."

Safe destinations are essential to tourism growth

The event also highlighted the importance of collaboration in creating conditions for tourism enterprises to succeed, including the safety of visitors, employees and surrounding communities.

Deputy Minister of Police, Mr Cassel Mathale, said:

"A successful tourism economy depends on visitors feeling safe and communities benefiting from the opportunities tourism creates. Safety is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation between law enforcement, government, businesses and communities. We must continue working together to protect visitors, support tourism establishments and build confidence in our destinations."

An entrepreneur's vision realised

For Hotel 247 owner Ms Khosi Mthalane, the restaurant launch represents another step in her efforts to strengthen the establishment's position in the hospitality market.

"When I acquired Hotel 247, I saw an opportunity to build a business that could grow and compete while creating opportunities for others. This refurbishment allows us to offer our guests an improved dining experience and serve more customers. I am grateful to the Department of Tourism and the NEF for supporting our growth journey. Our focus now is to make this investment work by delivering excellent service and building a stronger, sustainable business."

The launch took place during Tourism Month, reinforcing the contribution of tourism to entrepreneurship, employment and inclusive economic participation.

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